



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Wednesday - February 20, 2002

- ***In the West***, scattered, light showers continue across the ***northern half of the region***. Meanwhile, dry weather prevails in ***southern California and the Southwest***, where summer water-supply concerns are mounting, but warm conditions are promoting vegetable and small grain development.
- ***On the Plains***, mild, dry weather is reducing topsoil moisture reserves across the ***southern half of the region***. More serious dryness persists on the ***northern High Plains***, where winter wheat has been exposed to frequent gusty winds and occasional temperature extremes.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, widespread rain showers continue to recharge soil moisture reserves but create muddy conditions in feedlots. Snow is confined to the ***northernmost Corn Belt***.
- ***In the South***, showers and thunderstorms are sweeping across areas ***east of the Delta***, providing beneficial moisture for pastures and winter grains.

Outlook: The storm system affecting the ***East*** is forecast to move offshore by Thursday. In the storm's wake, mostly dry weather will prevail nationwide, except in the ***Northwest***, where showery weather will continue. By week's end, sharply colder air will begin to overspread the ***northern Plains*** and threaten the already drought-stressed winter wheat crop. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for February 25 - March 1 calls for a period of cold weather to affect most areas from the ***Plains eastward***, accompanied by near- to above-normal precipitation. Meanwhile, warm, dry weather will continue across ***Arizona and southern California***.

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